

St Augustine's church
Honor Oak Park

HARPSICHORD RECITAL

by Gilbert Rowland

Saturday 17th September 2016
at 2.00 pm

Rameau: Suite in E minor/major (1724)

Scarlatti: Sonatas

K.476 in G minor

K.477 in G major

K.287/288 in D major (for organ)

K.466 in F minor

K.551 in B flat major

Soler: Sonatas

R.69 in F major

R.117 in D minor

R.64 in G major (Played on the Harpsichord)

R.64 in G major (Played on the Organ)

Handel: Suite in D minor (HWV 448)

This concert is being sponsored by
Southwark & South London Society of Organists

PROGRAMME

Suite in E minor/major

Jean Phillippe Rameau

(1683 - 1764)

Allemande - Courante - Gigue en rondeaux I & II - Le Rappel des Oiseaux - La Villageoise - Rigaudons I & II - Musette en rondeau - Tambourin

This year marks the 250th anniversary of Rameau's death, arguably 18th century France's greatest composer. Born in Dijon in 1683 he held various organist posts before settling in Paris in 1722 where he taught the harpsichord and published his 'Traité de l'harmonie' in which he set out doctrines of inversions of chords and principles of chord progression. He published five suites in three books, dating from 1706, 1724 and 1728. He also composed over 20 operas, notable for their novel use of colourful orchestration and bold harmonies.

The E minor/major Suite dates from 1724. The Allemande and Courante are typically French in style with plenty of scope for the employment of 'notes inégales' in performance. Of the two Gigue the first is pastoral in character, the second more lively with some use of bagpipe drones. 'Le Rappel des Oiseaux' depicts falconry with fanfare passages suggesting a call to arms. 'La Villageoise' (Peasant Girl) is a graceful Gavotte in Rondo form. The two Rigaudons are lively French dances, similar to the Bourée. More use of bagpipe effects occur in the Musette, and the Tambourin is a very rhythmic folk dance originating in Provence.

Six Sonatas

Domenico Scarlatti

(1685 - 1757)

- K. 476 in G minor
- K. 477 in G major
- K. 287 in D major ('Per Organo')
- K. 288 in D major ('Per Organo')
- K. 466 in F minor
- K. 551 in B flat major

The majority of Scarlatti's five hundred and fifty five Harpsichord Sonatas appear to have been composed after his emigration to Spain in 1729. Most of these highly individual works, many of which reflect his preoccupation with the melodic, rhythmic and harmonic mannerisms of Spanish music, were written for his royal pupil, the Infanta Maria Barbara. In 1746 she became Queen of Spain following the death of Philip V. About four hundred of these single movement compositions were probably intended to be performed in pairs, since this is how they appear in four different manuscript sources, copied out during Scarlatti's lifetime.

K 476 is an exciting virtuoso piece, stormy in character, calling for the full five octave range and making frequent use of wide skips in the left hand. There are some bold modulations in the second half.

K 477 is a hunting-type jig, with the imaginary effects of bugle calls, hunting horns and galloping horses vividly portrayed.

K 287/288 are specifically marked for a 'Chamber Organ with two keyboards of Flutes and Reeds', and are in reality a pair of voluntaries without a double bar. They are written in a more restrained idiom than the majority of Scarlatti's Harpsichord Sonatas.

K 466 is one of Scarlatti's most lyrical and beautiful slow movements somewhat tinged with melancholy, enhanced by gently flowing arpeggios in the left hand.

K 551 also contains passages of imitative writing as well as being very much a brilliant virtuoso work, making effective use of rapid scales and arpeggios over the whole range of the keyboard. The start of the second half takes up material heard at the end of the first section followed by a more lyrical passage with some surprising modulations.

INTERVAL

Sonatas

Antonio Soler
(1729 - 1783)

Rubio No. 69 in F major
Rubio No. 117 in D minor
Rubio No. 64 in G major (Played on the Harpsichord)
Rubio No. 64 in G major (Played on the Organ)
(I) Pastoral: Allegretto (II) Allegretto grazioso (III) Intendo a 4.

The Spanish composer Antonio Soler, took holy orders in 1752, became a monk and entered the monastery of El Escorial near Madrid, where he remained until his death in 1783. Although he wrote a vast amount of Choral music, he is chiefly remembered for his 130 or so harpsichord sonatas, which Fr Samuel Rubio edited and published during the latter half of the twentieth century. From 1752 to 1757, Soler is reputed to have studied with Scarlatti, and many of his pupil's sonatas show a high degree of the master's influence. Despite his probable debt to Scarlatti, Soler's own personality is clearly in evidence in these works.

R 69 is a Spanish dance movement in 6/8 time exhibiting much *joie de vivre*, brilliant sounding runs, and an abundance of trills.

R 117 is one of Soler's finest slow movements, being an intensely melancholy work which makes use of augmented chords and other unusual harmonic progressions for the period. Towards the end of each half the rhythms become more agitated and the harmonies more dissonant.

R 64 is the second work from a collection of six sonatas dating from 1777, all of which have three movements, the last of which is a fugue in each case, leading one to speculate that these works may have been intended for organ. I have decided to give a performance on both harpsichord and organ so listeners can decide for themselves. The term 'Pastorale' aptly describes the character of the first movement, a piece of considerable charm containing some unexpected twists of melody and harmony with themes seemingly derived from Spanish folklore. The second movement is typically 'Gallant' in idiom and contains some audacious chromatic touches, whilst the joyful four-part double fugue which concludes the work with its peals of bells towards the end and its many excursions into remote keys, shows Soler to be a master of counterpoint even though he only employed it intermittently in the majority of his keyboard works.

Suite in D minor (HWV 448)

George Frideric Handel
(1685 - 1759)

- I. Overture
- II. Allemande
- III. Courante
- IV. Sarabandes I + II
- V. Chaconne

Handel published two sets of Harpsichord Suites during his lifetime - The Eight Great Suites of 1720, and The Second Collection of 1733. However amongst the 25 or so suites that he composed are a number of so called 'Miscellaneous Suites' which Handel probably composed before leaving Germany in 1707 of which this is one.

The first movement follows a typical French Overture pattern - a stately 4/4 section with dotted rhythms (though not notated as such in this instance), followed by a lively fugal Allegro in 3/4 and closing with another slow 4/4 section.

The Allemande with its continuous flow of semiquavers appears to be two-part throughout but there is a hidden melodic line in the right-hand part suggesting the need for some notes to be held over.

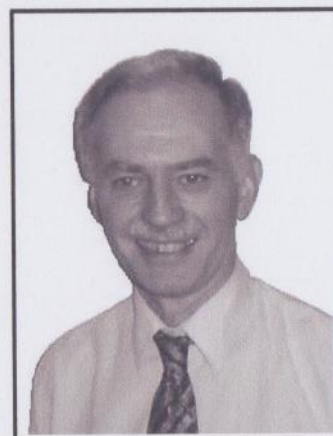
The lively Courante is a 'perpetuum mobile' in the Italian style with a quick one beat to a bar $\frac{3}{4}$ pulse. Again the constant two-part texture suggests a need for harmonic filling in.

A beautiful pair of Sarabandes follows (the second slightly quicker than the first) showing Handel at his most lyrical and poignant.

The Suite concludes with a very lively dance-like Chaconne with ten variations. Its origin seems to lie in those of the French ballet of the Baroque period with strongly marked second beats. This movement also bears some resemblance to the dances from Handel's Opera 'Almira'.

Gilbert Rowland

Gilbert Rowland first studied the harpsichord with Millicent Silver. Whilst still a student at the Royal College of Music, he made his debut at Fenton House 1970 and first appeared at the Wigmore Hall in 1973.



His mentors have included Kenneth Gilbert and Fernando Valenti. Recitals at the Wigmore Hall and Purcell Room, appearances at major festivals in this country and abroad, together with broadcasts for Capital Radio and Radio 3 have helped to establish his reputation as one of Britain's leading harpsichordists.

His numerous records of works by Scarlatti, Soler, Rameau and Fischer have received considerable acclaim from the national press. The recording of the 13-CD set of Soler sonatas with Naxos is now complete. He also recorded a CD of Sonatas by Albero for London Independent Records which was released in 2009, and has recently released a double album of Handel Suites for the Divine Art Label which was recorded in 2010, followed by a second volume of Handel Suites recorded in 2012, and a third and final volume recorded in July 2014. In July he recorded the twelve Suites by Mattheson for Divine Art which will be released early in 2017.

Copies of Gilbert's CDs will be on sale during the interval and after the concert. Of the Scarlatti Sonatas being played, K. 476/477 are on Vol 2 and K. 551 on Vol. 3 (both Kingdom Label), Soler R. 69 and 117 are on Vol 3 (Naxos) and R. 64 on Vol. 10 (Naxos). The Rameau is on Vol. 1 (Naxos) and the Handel on Vol. 3 (Divine Art).